

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Social Services



ONS TRANSMITTAL NUMBER 06-05

Date: July 25, 2006

☐ ACTION ITEM

☒ INFORMATIONAL ITEM

Subject: *Smiles for Children Program* Interpreter Services

To: ONS Resettlement Provider Directors

From: Kathy A. Cooper
Virginia State Refugee Coordinator
Virginia Office of Newcomer Services

Contact: Penny Boyd at 804-726-7933 or penny.boyd@dss.virginia.gov

This is regarding the issue raised at the July 19th ONS Director's Meeting regarding the difficulty in obtaining interpreter services for *Smiles for Children Program*, which is a dental care program for FAMIS and FAMIS Plus eligible children.

We discussed this issue with the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS). They informed us that they are aware of the problem and are developing procedures to address it.

Issue: *Smiles for Children Program* contracts do not include a provision for interpreter services. The reason dentists participating in this program may appear non-responsive to requests for interpreters is that they have not received guidance how reimbursement for this service will be handled.

Solution: DMAS is developing a procedure for reimbursement which will be issued to dentists participating in the *Smiles for Children Program*.

Until these guidelines are issued, should an eligible refugee child be unable to obtain dental services through this program due to a lack of interpreter services, DMAS staff will work with the refugee provider to resolve the issue. If you need such assistance, contact Penny Boyd.

Attached, for your information, is a DMAS news release which explains this program.

Attachment (1)



News Release

Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, 600 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information Contact:

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Craig Markva (804) 225-2765

May 5, 2006

FAMIS 06-02

Smiles For Children Program Provides Dental Care for Those Most in Need

Cover The Uninsured Week is May 1-7, 2006

(RICHMOND, Va.)-- Access to dental care for children-in-need is getting easier in Virginia. More dentists are now treating FAMIS and FAMIS Plus (Medicaid) patients under the new ***Smiles For Children*** program. During the first nine months of the new program—from July 1, 2005 through March 31, 2006—an additional 159 new dentists were credentialed and enrolled to provide services. As a result, a total of 779 dentists now participate in the ***Smiles For Children*** program.

There are also several new participating children's dental health centers that have opened or plan to open. These include the Community Children's Dental Center in Charlottesville and "Small Smiles" and "Kool Smiles" in the Richmond, Roanoke, and Virginia Beach areas.

According to Terry D. Dickinson, D.D.S., Executive Director of the Virginia Dental Association, "The new ***Smiles For Children*** program sets a new standard for the country in providing needed dental care to our most vulnerable population."

Dr. Dickinson explains, "This program came about over a three-year period of time and was created by people with one thought in mind—providing dental care to those children most in need. It is great for the Commonwealth and for our future."

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Approximately 75% of participating dentists are now treating FAMIS and FAMIS Plus (Medicaid) patients. This is a significant increase, as prior to the *Smiles For Children* program's implementation on July 1, 2005 only 50% of all enrolled dentists were treating FAMIS and FAMIS Plus patients and filing claims.

In 2005, the General Assembly approved an unprecedented 30% increase in funding for dental fees to attract more dentists and dental-specialty providers to the *Smiles For Children* network. On July 1, 2005, 28% of the funding was allocated to increase the dental fee schedule. Effective May 1, 2006, the remaining 2% of the funding was applied to fees related to dental specialty services.

As more dentists become available to provide care, more children are being treated. Preliminary data for the first six months of *Smiles For Children* indicates an upward trend in the number of children receiving care.

Access to dental care in under-served geographical areas has also improved. There are six counties that now have at least one participating dentist that did not have one prior to *Smiles For Children*. These counties are Amelia, Brunswick, Charles City, Highland, Madison and Prince George.

The *Smiles For Children* dental program provides coverage for diagnostic, preventive, restorative/surgical dental procedures, as well as orthodontia services for FAMIS and FAMIS Plus children. The *Smiles For Children* program encourages good dental health and recommends regular check-ups. There are **no** costs to enrollees or co-payments for dental care services in the *Smiles For Children* program.

The *Smiles For Children* program is administered by Doral Dental USA. All FAMIS and FAMIS Plus children receive a *Smiles For Children* member handbook from Doral Dental that explains the program and provides a listing of participating dental providers in their area.

Technology and improved customer service are also helping parents locate dental services for their children who are already enrolled in *Smiles For Children*. There is an automated phone system through a single toll-free number. Services are available in Spanish and English. Members can also locate *Smiles For Children* dental providers through the Doral dental website at www.doralusa.com or through the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services website at www.dmas.virginia.gov. Select the *Smiles For Children* link.

To be eligible for *Smiles For Children*, children need to be enrolled in FAMIS or FAMIS Plus. It is easy to apply for FAMIS or FAMIS Plus. Applications are taken on-line, by phone, or through a local Department of Social Services. An on-line application in either English or Spanish is available on the FAMIS website at www.famis.org. The FAMIS program offers a toll-free number that families can call to start an application over the phone. Families can reach someone at FAMIS Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon by calling **1-866-87FAMIS** (1-866-873-2647). Families may also apply by submitting an application to their local Department of Social Services office. No face-to-face interview is *required* to apply.